

# Cavellini in California and in Budapest



living-room show 1980

# ARTE POSTALE/MAIL ART: ITALIAN COMMUNICATION ARTISTS

## Gaglione 1940-2040

*"Arte Postale" is a description of the phenomenal surge in mail art activity in Italy since 1974, which details the individual artists, exhibitions, and publications. Bill Gaglione (a.k.a. Dadaland), is a significant figure who has done much to foster and spread mail art. Among his contributions to the field are coining the term "dadazine," co-editing the N.Y.C.S. Weekly Breeder, and Vile International magazine (with Anna Banana).*

Not since the futurist movement has the world seen such energy and enthusiasm from Italy in the way of art and communication. As Robin Crozier said, "Everyone everyday is receiving mail art from Italy." The people most responsible for this new wave of activity are Guglielmo Achille Cavellini, Romano Peli, and Michaela Versari.

In 1974, Cavellini started his self-historification project. He published the book *Cimeli*, in which he states, "Generally the gifted artist is recognized and appreciated as such only after his death. From that moment onward, the interest for his work and his personality becomes general. Researches are made among the papers and photographs of his existence. I don't want this to occur for me and my work; I am myself, therefore collecting and presenting all that concerns me. These documents, unfortunately incomplete, might have been totally lost or destroyed were it not for this indexing effort on my part."

In 1975 he published his photo book and in 1976, *25 Quadri della Collezione Cavellini (Living Room Exhibition)*. In 1977 Shakespeare and Company published *Guglielmo Achille Cavellini 1946-1976, Incontri/Scontri nella giungla dell'arte*. Perhaps his most important book to date is *Nemo Propheta in Patria*, published in 1978. Cavellini has mailed over 16,000 copies to artists around the world as part of his living room exhibition series. This book includes works by over eighty artists, such as Albrecht D., Jurgen Elsasser, Robert Filliou, Anna Banana, Ben Vautier, and Edgardo-Antonio Vigo.

Cavellini also has in preparation the Postal Art Museum, which to date has over 400 works by mail artists under glass; and within the next two years, plans to have this exhibition tour major museums throughout the world.

In Parma, a group called C.D.O. (Centro Documentazione Organizzazione) and Mail Art Space, are directed by Romano Peli and Michaela Versari, who have been active since the early 1970s. In February 1974, C.D.O. printed its first quick-copy book, *The Supernatural*. In 1975 the first mail art invitation was mailed out on a picture postcard. During 1976, C.D.O. took part in many

Guglielmo Achille Cavellini, *Cavellini in California and in Budapest, Living Room Show, 1980, Italy, 1980. Cover.*

exhibitions, including *Poema Tampon* (Buenos Aires-Zabala), *Arte en la Calle* (Madrid—Santiago Mercado), *International Exhibition of Mail Art* (Recife—Paulo Bruscky). In 1977 a one year exhibition called *The First International Postal Encounter Art Workers of the Visual Communications* showed such artists as Genesis P-Orridge, Johan van Geluwe, and Hans-Oiseau Kalkman, along with articles on art/communication by Angelika Schmidt of West Germany and Robert Rehfeldt of East Germany. The space is one of the best organized and most active in Europe, which also has an archive of books, stamps, rubber stamps, and postcards. Recently at the Mail Art Space, such artists as Meccini, Sarenco, Hahn, Sedlaceh, Mew, Cristobal, Banana and Gaglione had one month exhibitions. Ken Friedman exhibited at the space in 1979.

Two more important exhibitions organized last year by C.D.O. were IDENTIKIT, an add-on/send to show, and C.D.O. MAIL/ART (comunicazione postale da 26 Paese del Mondo) with the collaboration of Comune di Parma Assessorato Cultura e Teatro, at the Nuova Galleria del Teatro, held between May and June. A fifty page catalogue of the exhibition was printed and mailed with introductions written by Romano Peli and Michaela Versari.

The most important show to date in Italy, the one that brought this "new wave" of Italian mail artists is the *Mantua Mail '78*, organized by Peli and Versari with the help of the Assessorship of the Culture of Mantua. *Mantua Mail '78* was the largest international mail art exhibition in Europe, with over 4,000 pieces arriving for the exhibition. A two hundred page catalogue, with written texts by Ken Friedman, Michael Crane, Hervé Fischer, J.G. de Rook, Paulo Bruscky, Horacio Zabala and Guillermo Deisler was produced.

Another "old master" of the network is Antonio Ferro, who runs Centro Experimenta in Naples. Last year he organized *La Post-Avanguardia*, a marginal mail art exhibition for which the Museo del Sannio printed a catalogue.

Michele Perfetti, another early mail artist, is involved with visual poetry publications and exhibitions. He is one of the founders of a group in Ferrara called *Richeche Inter/Media*, a self-established society. It is a center which provides a means for the advancement of culture. It was founded in 1976 along with Camerani, Mara Sitti, Cavallima, Gentili, and Mattaliano. The group held a mail art/performance series called *Evento '77*, from which a catalogue/review was printed.

In 1975, Horacio Zabala, along with Edgardo-Antonio Vigo, organized *The Last International Exhibition of Mail Art '75* at Arte Nuevo Gallery in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He also wrote an article in *Postas Argentinas* about the exhibition titled "Arte-Correo/Nueva forma de expresion." After moving to Italy, Zabala organized an exhibition in Naples, along with Ferro, the theme and title of which was *Today Art is a Prison*. He also invited selected artists to make postcards in an edition of 100 copies for the exhibition.

Zona is a group that comes out of Firenze. This non-profit art organization holds many shows and events. In February/March, 1977 Zona held an exhibition called *Inbound/Outbound*, consisting of documentation of alternatives in art, with happenings, sound poetry, video, and films. An anthology of all works received was published and mailed to each contributor. Last year Zona organized an audio/cassette exhibition, and in February of this year, an *International Post Card Exhibition*. They are also working on a project in collaboration with Centro Rosciamo, Informazione Sperimentazione Arte Contemporary in Livorno, called *Copyright*, which is an international anthology of visual art documents that will be published in the spring of 1979. One of the most active members of the group is Maurizio Nannucci, who is involved with the visual poetry movement.

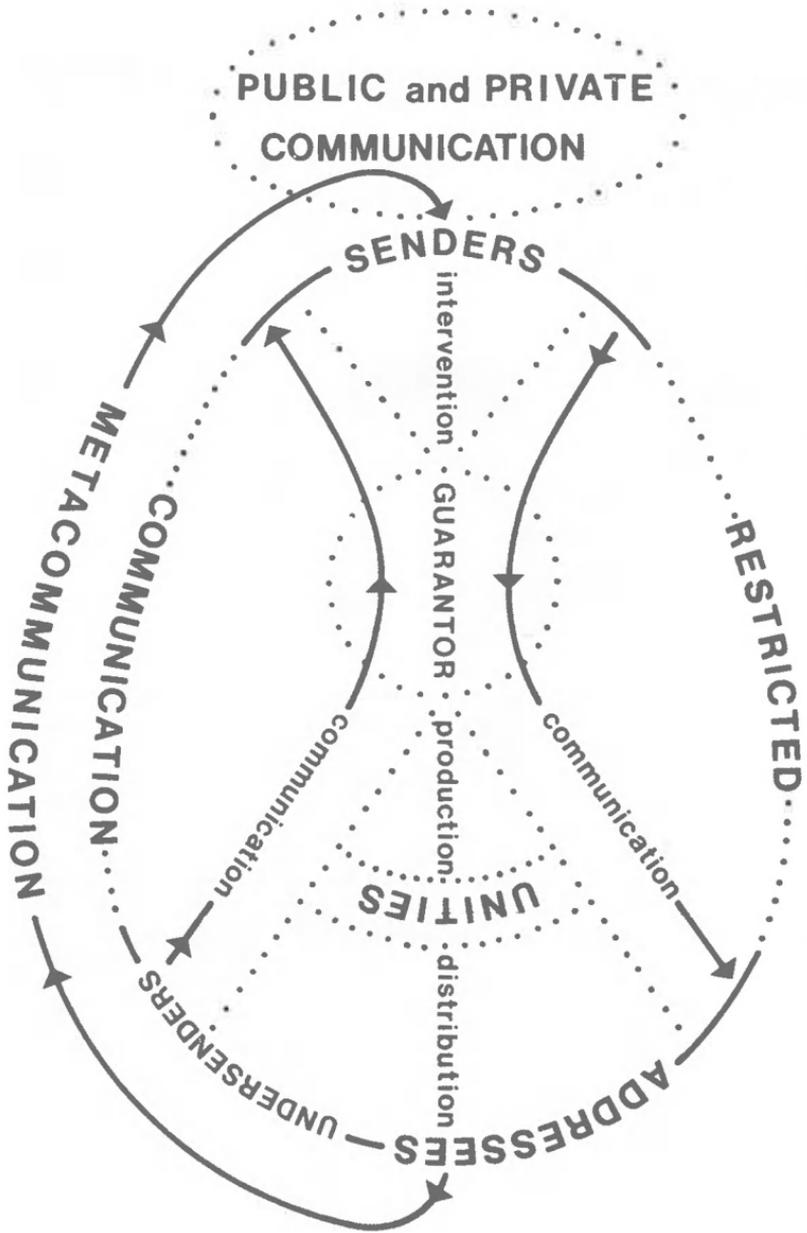
Another couple involved with visual poetry are Giulia Niccolai and Adriano Spatola. They edit one of the best independent Italian magazines, *Tam Tam*, and

SOUS LE PATRONAGE DE L'ACADÉMIE FRANÇAISE  
**LES MAÎTRES DE LA PEINTURE  
CAVELLINI 1914.2014**



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Guglielmo Achille Cavellini, *Les Maîtres de la Peinture Cavellini 1914—2014*, Italy, 1976. Artists' stamps reprinted from *Vile International*, no. 2/3.



Mohammed, *The Mohammed System*, Italy, 1979. Diagram of communications model.

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Riconvocazione di Ferruccio Dragoni

Ferruccio Dragoni, *Mohammed*, Italy, c. 1979. Color xerox sheet.



Centro Documentazione Organizzazione (R. Peli and M. Versari), untitled, Italy, 1979. Rubber stamp image of Ray Johnson and rubber stamps used in correspondence (top).



Antonio Ferro, *La Post-Avanguardia*, Italy, c. 1978. Postcard for exhibition.



Zona, *Inbound/Outbound*, Italy, c. 1977. Postcard.

annually issue an assemblage of art/text called *Geiger*. Niccolai and Spatola have published some fifty books of poetry to date.

Also closely associated with visual poetry and sound/text is Arrigo Lora-Totino, who produces records, publications, and sound performances. Matteo D'Ambrosio published a book called *Parola Immagine E Scrittura*, a book of concrete/visual poems in which we find such artists as Bentevoglio, Ugo Carrega, and Mussio.

Of all the new wave Italian communication artists, perhaps the most active is Vittore Baroni, who jumped from 79 to Number 4 on Buster Cleveland's *Hot 100 List*. Baroni makes rubber stamp art, xerox art, and a publication called *Futurgrappismo*.

Also very active is a group in Parma called POST/AL/ART founded by Rosa Masoni and Nello Castaldo. In 1977 they visited the Mail Art Center in San Francisco, and have participated in the *Mantua Mail '78*, the *Blue Show* in Iceland, and the *Black and White Show* in Spain.

Other mail artists whose recent activities should be mentioned are The Mental Traveller; L'Angelo Pretotani; Rino Tacchella with his transparent postcards; William Xerra; Guiseppe Buccafusca; Enzo Benedetto; Radu Dragomirescu of Farmart in Naples; Pippo Castaldo; Carlo Bastisti of *Informazione*; Andrea Montin; Roberto Riviello; Eugenio Miccini; Sarenco; Mohammed/Plinio Mesciulam with his color xerox postal art mailings; Desolivis Fernandino; Mario Merz; Luigi Franceschi; Marco Lucchetti; Maurizio Goldoni, who organized "Communication/Message," a telephone piece at the *Mantua Mail '78* show; Roberto Biasci; Bruno Danini; Ferruccio Dragoni; Gianni Becciani and Alberto Galliniani, who organized the mail art exhibition *Il Moro* at the Studio d'Arte Contemporanea in Firenze; Barbara Radice; Dadamaino; Professor M. Faaccaro; Marco Pachetti; Guglielmo Lusignoli; Adriano Altamira; Mario Daniele; Maria G. Bertacci; Peppe Pappa; Piero Simoni; Emanuele Morgan Mignone (also into performance art); Arturo Schwarz, who held the *Banana Mail Art Show* at his gallery in Milano in 1976; Omar Galliani; Pinuccia Bernardoni; Nino Tommaso Durante; The Critica-O Group; *Data*, an Italian art magazine; Camille Sbrisa and Alzek Misheff, directors of a performance space in Milano; Dov' e la Tigre; Giancarlo Bocchi, who publishes *T.R.A.*, an avant-garde art magazine in Italy; Giovanni Lista, now living in Paris, who wrote a complete book on Italian futurism, *Futurismo*; Giancarlo Politi of *Flash Art*; *Pogo*, a punk/dada/art xerox magazine; Bino Sanminiatielli, the futurist who published the magazine *NOI* in 1917; Ken Damy; Patricia Guerresi & Dafne; Ugo Pitozzi; and the performance space of Luciono Inga Pin.



POST/AL/ART (Rosa Masoni), untitled, Italy, 1979. Xerox collage.



*Artist*

# NO 1



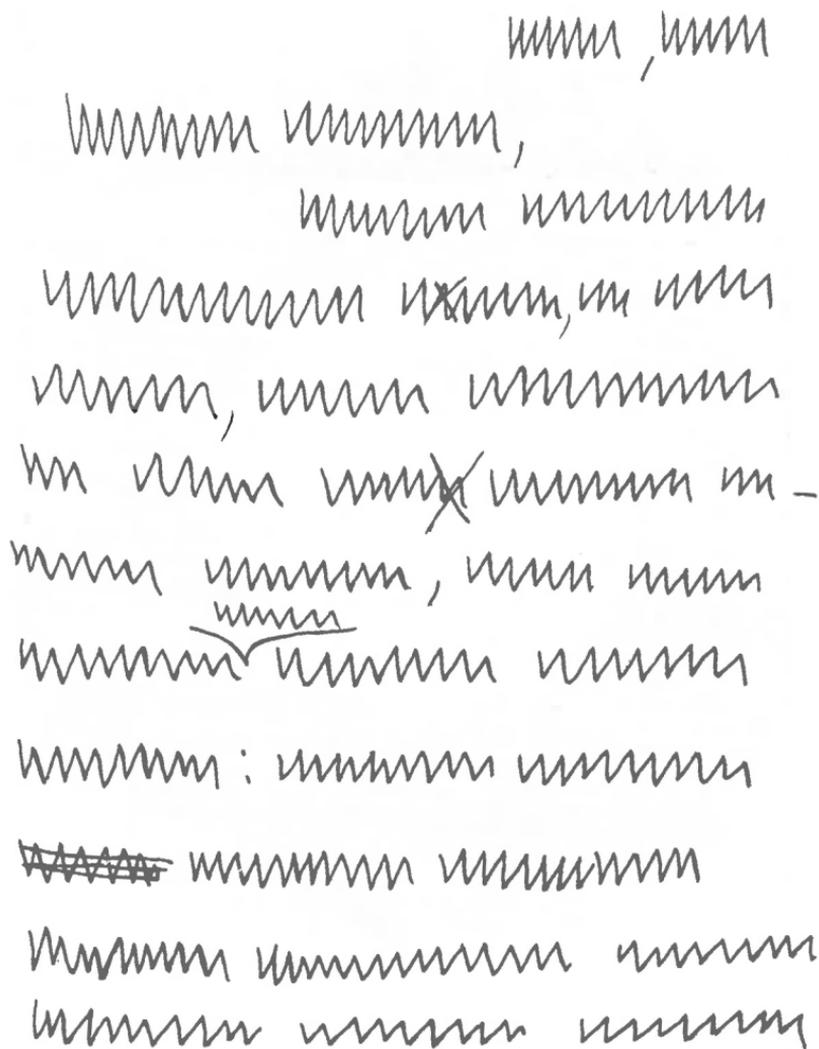
Unknown, *Punk Artist N. 1*, Italy, 1979. Poster.

supplemento al n.1 - gennaio 1979 - di Punk Artist



Gianni Becciani, *Really, I Don't Know*, Italy, 1979. Jello-disc original.

GUGLIELMO LUSIGNOLI architetto



Guglielmo Lusignoli, untitled, Italy, n.d. Drawing.

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[Redacted]

Betty Danon, *Others & I*, Italy, n.d. Exhibition announcement for the Apollinaire Gallery, Milan, Italy.



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Vittore Baroni, *Arte Postale!*, Italy, 1979. Announcement for an artist publication.



Bedeschi Ponzi (top and bottom), *Studio 79*, Italy, n.d. Artists' stamps. Guglielmo Achille Cavellini (middle left), untitled, Italy, n.d. Rubber stamp. Nicola Frangione, untitled, Italy, n.d. Rubber stamp.